Intro to content strategy

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

What a content strategy is

- **A content strategy includes writing guides, e-books, and other useful documents and publish them online for free**

- The benefits of doing this:
  - it drives more traffic to your site where people can buy your products
  - you share information so that your audience understands your product better
  - the goal is to satisfy some need for your potential customers so they consider you a helpful source of information
  - it establishes trust so on the long run people will be more likely to buy your stuff

- Content is a broad term and it can mean a lot of things:
  - blog posts
  - social media posts
  - videos
  - podcasts
  - infographics
  - e-books
  - emails

- **Content is anything that provides information or value and it's not a product or service**

- For any piece of content you want to create, there is pretty much the same process:
  - you have to define your audience
  - focus on a need they have
  - create high quality information that addresses that need
  - publish it online
  - promote it
  - engage with your audience when they respond to your content

Inbound vs. outbound

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

The two directions of marketing

- **Outbound marketing**

- In the past, if people wanted to know what products were available, they had to wait for newspapers, magazines, TV ads, or flyers to tell them
- These marketing channels are still around but they're not working very well anymore
- On the flip side, if your audience lives on these channels, it's something worth trying
- It's almost impossible to track who sees the outbound marketing ads and if any of the people who saw them actually bought your stuff

- **Inbound marketing**

- The new marketing channels are trying to drive people to go to a page where you can sell them something or collect their email addresses
- It's called inbound because you push the information out there but the customers are the ones who seek you out

- **Your content has to be less about advertising and more about providing value and establishing trust between you and your potential customers**
- Figure out what your target audience might search for on Google and create helpful content about that
- Inbound strategies are quicker, cheaper and easier to do for new businesses

Why should we define our audience?

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Knowing who you're targeting

- Don’t create any content before establishing what kind of people and businesses you’re creating it for
- Figure out who is your ideal customer or client and what they’d like to read
- Your content has to be good, but that is not enough if it’s not targeting the right people

- **Benefits of defining your audience:**
- #1 It will help you focus your content efforts
- #2 It helps you identify with your audience and speak their language
- #3 It saves you time, effort, and money

How do we define our audience?

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Defining your target audience

- Figure out who would want to use your product or who would benefit from it

There are three types of data that you can use:

- #1 Geographic
  - where are your customers located?
- #2 Demographic
  - age, gender, marital status, education, income
- Geographics & demographics provide quantitative data
- #3 Psychographic
  - qualitative data
  - why people do what they do
  - interests, activities, opinions

- **If you already have customers, you can get information about their interests and opinions by getting them to complete a survey**
- Another way is to see what your followers say on social media about your product and what they post on their personal page

- Ask questions, talk to people, and observe what they do
- **If you don’t have any customers yet, define the audience you want to have**
- If you find a competitor that’s very similar to you, you can study their audience
- Quantcast.com - search for a website and get a report on their traffic and audience details

Creating user personas

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

How to create a user persona

- **A user persona is a character you create that represents your ideal customer**

- If an idea works for the user persona, it should apply to everybody in your target audience

- **What to include in the profile of your ideal user:**
  - name (you can use an alliteration, like Startup Steve)
  - age
  - location
  - job role
  - annual income
  - educational level
  - personal and professional goals
  - daily challenges they face
  - favorite websites/brands
  - personal story/biography and what drives them

- Using this user persona, you can figure out what your target audience would care about, what they'd like to read or what they'd be interested to buy

- You can have more than one user persona if your audience is more diverse

Content types 1: Tutorials, interviews, roundups

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Types of content you can create

- **Tutorials**

- Tutorials are pieces of content that walk people through how to do something
- Think about what you can offer a tutorial about:
  - internal thinking - make tutorials about your own product (ex.: how to install it)
  - external thinking - make tutorials about other things in your industry that are related to your product in a way or another (ex.: Wistia offers video hosting; they make tutorials about how to become better at making videos)
- You can also make tutorials that are unrelated to what you sell but your customers might find interesting
- If you already have customers, you can get inspiration for tutorials from the questions they ask about how your product works

- **Interviews**

- The goal of an interview is to ask someone who knows something some questions, looking for valuable information in their answers

- People love to share their knowledge, and they're flattered when you call them an expert
- Where to find experts:
  - they are often speakers at events
  - industry blogs and websites
  - latest books in your industry
- People who are willing to be interviewed usually make themselves easy to contact, so you'll probably find their email address listed somewhere
- You should come well prepared to the interview - know what your goal is
- Keep in mind that experts have limited time, so try to make the most of it by asking the right questions
- If you're doing an online interview, make sure you record it
- Establish their credentials and ask them to explain how they started or what led them to this industry
- Ask for tips or their favorite tools in your industry
- Ask their opinion on different topics that might interest your audience
- Ask them where people can contact them if they want to connect

- **Roundups**

- In roundups, you ask only one question and a series of experts answer it

- Benefits of doing a roundup:
  - all the experts will promote your article in order to promote themselves
  - you have less writing to do, you can get a longer article just by asking more people
- Give the experts a deadline for sending their answers
- You can use a survey tool to ask the question and gather their information (name, company, website or social media profile)

Content types 2: Listicles, resource compilations

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Types of content you can create

- Lists allow you to quickly write a lot of information and they allow the reader to easily scan those pieces of information
- People like lists because they know exactly how much stuff they're getting (ex.: 8 tips to do x) and they're easy to digest

- **Listicles**

- List + article = listicle
- There are already tons of listicles on the internet, but the number is continuously increasing
- You can make listicles about your product or about something related to your industry that your customers might be interested in
- Make your titles intriguing so people are curios to click on your article
- Listicles are very flexible - they can be images, links, videos, or just written information

- **Resource compilations**

- These are lists of helpful resources, usually with links to each one
- An important benefit of creating resource compilations is link building
- If you link to other people's stuff, they are very likely to link back to you, increasing the SEO value of your page
- Think about what kind of resources your audience might benefit from
- Look at your bookmarks and do research to curate the best resources

Content types 3: Company stories, case studies, infographics

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Types of content you can create

- **Company stories**
  - Storytelling is a great way to describe how and why your company started or what problem you solved
  - Stories help you connect with potential customers on a deeper level
  - You can write stories about your team members, your new office, charity work that your company does
  - Stories make companies more approachable and trustworthy
  - You can also write stories about your customers and the interesting things they've done with your product
- **Case studies**
  - If you have customers that have used your product successfully, you can share their experience (with their permission)
  - Make sure you include some actual data to support the story

- **Infographics**

- Infographics help you tell a story in a visual engaging way, usually by using a long vertical image

- Infographics might have other content types embedded in them

- You can use text to explain the images, but you should focus on the visuals

- How to create an infographic:
  - Hire a designer
  - Use free tools like Canva

Content types 4: Minisites, ultimate guides

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Types of content you can create

- These two content types aim to provide everything you need to know about a specific topic

- **Minisites**

- The idea is to create an entirely separate website with its own functions and branding and you promote that by itself

- In the end, you create it to support your main company website, but it has its own domain

- Example: Hubspot's Website Grader - once people enter their email on this site, Hubspot uses it to promote their main site

- The main advantage of a minisite is that people don't get the feeling that you want to sell them something, like they would if you just created a new page or a blog post on your company website

- **Ultimate guides**

- When your audience needs more information than a listicle can provide, they might search for an ultimate guide on a topic

- Ultimate guides are supposed to include everything you can possibly need to know about something
- If you label your guide as “ultimate”, you have to deliver what you promise
- Figure out what ultimate guide would make the most sense for your audience
- After reading an ultimate guide, people will learn how to do something from A to Z, but they will also gain trust in the author of the guide, which might lead to future sales for you
- **In order to get the best results, you can combine all these content types**

Common topics you can use

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Tips on choosing your topics

- In order to create good content, there are 2 things that you need to take into consideration:

- **#1 Category**

  - you have to make sure your topic matches you and your customers' needs and interests

- **#2 Scope**

  - this refers to how much within a category you're going to cover
  - broad approach - you cover a wide range of related topics
  - narrow approach - you only focus on a few concepts

- If you feel like your market is saturated by other people writing about the same topic, take that as a sign that there is an established audience out there for this kind of content

- If nobody is covering the topics you want, that's not a good sign

- You can be unique in the way you write about these topics, but the topic itself doesn't have to be unique
- To get inspiration, search for your topic on Google and see what people are writing
- Subscribe to blogs in your industry and your competitors' newsletters

The key to content creation

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

How content provides value

- The most important thing when creating content is to provide value for the reader
- In order to be valuable, content has to do at least one of these things:

- **#1 Entertain people**

  - you should focus on this if your business is related to entertainment in some way

- **#2 Educate people**

  - after reading your article, people need to feel like they've learned something
  - make sure your title is not misleading and you actually deliver what you promise
  - make your content easy to read and understand (bullets, spaced out paragraphs, etc.)
  - provide a complete solution for the reader's problem

- **#3 Compel people to do something**

  - make it clear at the end of the article what the next step should be for the reader
  - motivate them to do a certain action

What to write: #1 Google autocomplete

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Using Google autocomplete to get ideas

- You can get inspiration by searching on Google for different keywords related to what you do and see what the autocomplete feature shows you

- **How to search:**
- Write some keywords for what your company or product does (ex.: photo editing, music app, etc.)
- Add the word “for” - autocomplete will shows you who might need whatever you do
- If you have an app:
  - add “built with” or “that” - autocomplete will show you features or requirements people are looking for
  - add “that don’t” to see problems or issues customers want to avoid or fix
- If you add an extra space in the middle of a sentence, the autocomplete feature will try to insert a word right there and not at the end

- **Google autocomplete helps you figure out what people usually search for and what they want to read about**
- Check the results of these Google searches as well to see what's already out there

What to write: #2 Buzzsumo

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Using Buzzsumo to get ideas

- Buzzsumo indexes all the popular articles and links that are being shared and engaged with on social media
- Search for different terms related to your product
- If the posts that show up in the results have good engagement, it's usually a good sign that people are interested in those topics
- Click on the articles and read some of them, trying to figure out what made them so popular
- There's nothing wrong with getting inspiration from other writers, but this approach allows you to at least copy the most successful ones

What to write: #3 Google keyword planner

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Using the keyword planner to get ideas

- Sign up for Google AdWords (free) in order to get access to the keyword planner
- Click “Search for new keywords using a phrase, website, or category” and fill out the form
- Once you get the results, look at the ones with the highest number of searches
- **Think about why people would search for those terms, what needs they might have, and see if you can use any of the topics for one of your articles**
- Combine these ideas with different content formats
- Start searching again as many times as you can until you get some good ideas
- When you write the article, show off your expertise on the topic and describe how your product might be useful for the readers

What to write: #4 Twitter

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Using Twitter to get ideas

- **Twitter Trends is a special section of the platform that shows the top hashtags, topics, or events of the day**
- Ignore the political topics that are trending - engaging in that kind of stuff is not productive for your goals
- If you find anything interesting, jump in and participate to show your personality as a company
- **Example:**
  - The hashtag #traveltuesday is trending
  - You have a productivity app
  - Write a post about how your users can use the app while traveling, tweet about it and use that hashtag
- Keep in mind that your trends list is specific to your location
- Be aware of what's happening in your area and try to link yourself to the major events
- You can use Tweetdeck to easily monitor specific Twitter hashtags

What to write: #5 Reddit

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Using Reddit to get ideas

- Search for subreddits that are related to your industry or product
- Look for posts that have a decent amount of upvotes and comments
- If someone is asking for advice, you can write an article about that
- By reading the comments, you can get an idea about what the most common opinion is and angle your content towards that
- After you write the piece, share it in the comments of the original post and mention your source of inspiration

What to write: #6 Quora

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Using Quora to get ideas

- Quora is a website where anyone can ask different questions and other people answer them
- Search for your topic and check out the top questions within that topic to get ideas on what people want to know
- **Look at the most upvoted answer for each question to see what people found most helpful**
- You can also search for a question and see what the autocomplete feature shows you
- Find the people who gave the most helpful answers on your topic and see what they write about (search for your term and click “Most Viewed Writers”)
- Look at their bio and read their most upvoted answers to get more ideas for your articles

Ranking the ideas you have

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Ranking your content ideas

- Once you have a list of content ideas, you will need to use a ranking system in order to know which one you should work on first
- What criteria you can use to rate your ideas:
  - **Relevance - how much the audience cares about the subject**
  - **Originality - how unique is your idea; if the idea is not original in itself, maybe you can approach it from a unique angle**
  - **Resources - do you have the resources, the knowledge, the experience, and the time to create this piece of content?**
  - **Goals - will this idea help you accomplish your goals (downloads, leads, shares, follows, etc.)?**
- Don’t get discouraged if not all your ideas are good, over time you’ll figure out what works best

Test it before you try it

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Validating your content ideas

- If you have a list of ideas but you're not sure which of them would work best, there are a few ways you can find out

- **#1 Email people you know and ask for their opinion**

  - choose people with similar interests as your audience
  - ask people you pick from a list of ideas to see what's more popular
  - you can send them a link to a survey where you list the ideas

- **#2 Share links to content on Twitter/Facebook**

  - look for blog posts that are similar to your idea and share them to see what reactions you get

- **#3 Facebook ads A/B testing**

  - 70% of content sharing in general is happening on Facebook
  - the idea is to run Facebook ads on your headlines before you actually write the articles
  - make sure you target the right audience

- pick a generic image and write 3-4 headlines for the same idea
- link the ad to your blog or something related to your business
- A/B testing means Facebook will display all the options and you will see which one performed better based on the clickthrough rate
- you can use A/B testing for any other parts of your article, not only headlines

Writing for specific goals: Intro

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Establishing your goals

- Whenever you have an idea, remember that everything you create should support one of your goals
- There are 3 main reasons why people write content:
  - **Branding - building awareness and your audience**
  - **Engagement - generating a reaction from your audience**
  - **Conversions - getting people to sign up, buy, fill out a form, etc.**

Writing for specific goals: Brand

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Writing to promote your brand

- Your brand is more than your name and your logo - it relates to what you say and what you do
- You will only launch a new product once in a while, but you're going to promote your brand daily through tweets, shares, posts, etc.
- Whatever you create will shape people's impression of you
- **The most common branding goals are establishing trust and connecting with people (building your following)**
- Write with the right voice and be consistent with it
  - casual or formal
  - supportive or authoritative
  - funny or serious
- The voice you write in connects to what you want to be seen as
- Write in a human way and show emotions like empathy towards your customers

- Write about why you're here - tell your company origin story
  - Why did you create your business or product?
  - Who helped you get started?
  - Who are you hoping to help?
  - What will success look like to you?

- What type of content you can write:

- **#1 Interviews**

  - you can interview yourself or your CEO and make it into a Q&A blog post
  - if you want to make it more relevant, put it in context with a recent product release and what your customers need to know

- **#2 Videos**

  - film a video interview with your CEO, your employees, behind the scenes footage

- **#3 Case studies**

  - show evidence of your success by sharing your customers' stories
  - if one of your values is transparency, write about your problems as well to keep customers informed

- When it comes to writing for your brand, don't write posts that invite people to buy your stuff - that's a different goal

- **Focus on making connections and creating brand awareness**

Writing for specific goals: Engagement/sharing

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Writing to get engagement

- Engagement is the next level beyond reading or watching something, because it includes likes, shares, and comments
- The more engagement you get on your content, the more people will end up seeing it
- People are more likely to engage on a post with more likes and comments, because they need social proof first
- Getting comments also helps you understand your audience and their needs better
- Strategies for getting more engagement:
- **#1 Offer free stuff in addition to your free content - like a free pdf, or a free subscription to your software**
- **#2 Ask for readers' opinion at the end of a post that presents both sides of a topic**
- **#3 Give it a great title to make people click the link**

  - 8-12 words
  - ask a question
  - be clear about what the article is about

- dial up the drama with unusual adjectives
- try the “Linkbait Title Generator” to get some crazy titles and adapt them to your needs
- don’t be misleading

- **#4 Link to others or mention them in your post**

- Research shows that there’s very little correlation between what people share online and what they actually read

- It’s important to get people to share your article, even if they don’t read it, because the goal is to get more exposure

- **Why people share things:**
  - to help out the person who made it
  - they know someone will appreciate it
  - to confirm an opinion they have
  - as a reflection of who they are or who they want to be
  - the content is entertaining in some way

- Keep these reasons in mind when you create your content

Writing for specific goals: Conversions

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Writing to get conversions

- Getting a conversion usually means turning a prospect into a paying customer
- Depending on your goals, it can also mean getting their email address or getting them to sign up for something
- Clearly establish your goals and do A/B testing to see what works better for achieving them
- How to get more conversions through your writing:

- **#1 Make people trust you or give you their data**

  - back up all the claims you make with real data
  - present case studies of people who have used your stuff

- **#2 Help the reader eliminate the competition**

  - write a pros and cons post comparing yourself to the competition
  - make sure you know your competitor well enough - you can ask your customers why they switched to you

- **#3 Appeal to people's egos**

  - if you cover a customer story, they will share it further to show they've been covered

- if your customer is a company, you might attract a lot of their customers to try your product as well
- people love free exposure, so you can encourage customers to send you their stories

- **#4 Appeal to people's fear of missing out**

  - write about how awesome an event was if you're trying to get people to register for the next one
  - make people think that something will be gone soon - the scarcity technique

- **#5 Give something away for free**

  - this works especially if you want to collect people's emails
  - create a PDF with some useful information and ask them to enter their email address or fill out a form in order to get it

- Conversions don't happen if you don't have a clear call to action (a button, a link, etc.)

- Don't get obsessed with conversions - it usually takes more pieces of content to get to your goals

Tactic #1: Long form content

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Writing a long form post

- A canonical, long form post is any post that's over 2500 words
- People usually write shorter posts because:
  - it takes less time & less effort
  - it allows them to publish more pieces
  - readers supposedly want shorter articles because of limited attention span & smaller mobile screens
- However, a long form post offers more value and allows you to have the "final word" on a topic (for example, when you create an ultimate guide)

Reasons to consider long form content:

- #1 It has better search ratings (Google assumes long articles have more information)
- #2 It generates more social shares
- #3 It's more convenient for the reader, because they don't have to go to different sources to get more information
- #4 People will spend more time on your site
- #5 It results in better reputation and authority for you

- #6 It has long term value - it will get more views long after the shorter pieces
- #7 It’s easier to collect data with a long form post - people are more willing to give you their email address in exchange of a longer article
- #8 It’s easier to promote - you can take various excerpts from it, you can promote individual sections, you can create spin-offs from each separate idea, etc.

Long form content - Example

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Writing a long form post

- Before writing a long form post, think about the following things:

- **#1 The goal - ex.: 1,000 new signups**
- **#2 The topic - pick something relevant for your audience and broad enough to fit a long post**
- **#3 The format - it could be a page on your site, a blog article, a PDF download, a minisite, etc.**
- **#4 The access - decide if the piece will be available to anyone or if people will need to type in their email first**
- **#5 The process - maybe you need to do research or need other people's help**

- Example:
  - The goal: 500 shares
  - The topic: The Ultimate Guide to Email Marketing for Small Businesses
  - The format: You add it as a resource on your site, where - you add social share buttons
  - The access: Free for everybody (easier to share)
  - The process: You do it all by yourself

Tactic #2: Controversial posts

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Writing a controversial post

- With a controversial post, you're just trying to spark a conversation between your readers
- Avoid religion and politics
- Write about your opinions on different topics or compare two similar products and say which one you think is better
- The idea is to generate reactions and make people share your post - either because they agree or because they don't
- **Controversial posts show that you have your own opinions and are not afraid to voice them**
- Stick to the topics that are relevant to your audience
- Types of controversial posts:

- **#1 Right way vs. Wrong way**

  - instead of informing the readers about different options for doing something, choose one of them and give arguments for why it's right or why it's wrong

- **#2 Something is dead**

  - declare an item, a topic, or a trend dead - this will spark discussions between people who agree and people who disagree

- **#3 The rebuttal**

  - when someone writes an article saying something is dead, you write a piece that brings arguments for why it's not dead

- It's very important to grab people's attention with your headline. Here's a few tips:
  - Keep headlines to 6-10 words long
  - Add controversial words - the best, the worst, terrible, crazy, ridiculous, mind-blowing - but don't oversell what you deliver in your post
  - Don't avoid conflict, highlight it instead, and call out the companies or items you're mentioning

- Search on Google for controversial posts on your topic and see what other people wrote

- Go to Reddit and look for controversial topics in your industry - usually, these are posts with a lot of upvotes but also a lot of downvotes

Tactic #3: Hyper-topical posts (part 1)

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Writing a hyper-topical post

- Hyper-topical content is content that covers something that's relevant in the world right now (current events)
- #1 Write about a current event in your industry
- #2 Write about any current event that's trending online
- Hyper-topical content is sometimes referred to as newsjacking, because you're trying to get attention by using the news
- **The ultimate goal is to connect that specific event to your company, your product, or your customers**

Benefits of writing hyper-topical content:

- #1 It makes you look current and it's a good chance to show off your personality
- #2 The Google algorithm looks for fresh content (meaning the age of the page, the search volume of the topic, and the amount of traffic and engagement that your content is getting)
- #3 The post can be perceived as being more relevant than older posts (it's not always true but that's what people assume)

Disadvantages of hyper-topical content:

- #1 The traffic will decrease rapidly once the event is not relevant anymore
- #2 When you get an idea for a hyper-topical post, you need to act fast
- #3 You have to constantly pay attention to your industry and what's happening in the world

- Don't use hyper-topical content all the time, you're not a newspaper

- Tips for staying up to date with events:
  - subscribe to different websites' newsletters
  - set up Google Alerts for the keywords you're interested in
  - follow relevant social media accounts
  - check out the latest discussions on Reddit or Twitter groups
  - check out Google Trends and see what people are searching for right now

Tactic #3: Hyper-topical posts (part 2)

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Writing a hyper-topical post

- Before starting to write a hyper-topical post, keep these things in mind:

- **#1 Figure out how to make the topic clearly relevant to your audience**

  - what value does it bring for them?
  - connect some helpful tips to the event

- **#2 Try to avoid negative topics and topics like politics and religion**

- What you can write about:
  - write up a full review of a product that's newly launched
  - write a recap post about what happened at an event, and what are the big takeaways
  - write your opinion about a new law, a change in a company, or a product update
  - write a prediction post about a product that's about to be launched

Tactic #4: Roundup posts

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Writing a roundup post

- Roundups are posts where you ask the same question to a group of experts and you share all their responses
- Establish what the question is going to be
- Types of questions:
  - Yes or No plus an explanation
  - Multiple choice plus an explanation
  - Open-ended
  - Fill in the blank (complete a sentence)
- Any response will be more valuable if it's accompanied by an explanation of why the expert chose that specific answer
- Steps for creating a roundup:
- **#1 Make a list of experts and how to contact them**

  - try to choose experts with a large following
- **#2 Prepare how you'll collect their responses**

  - create a Google form or use Survey Monkey
  - don't forget to include a confirmation page to thank them for responding

- **#3 Create a template message/email asking your question**

  - greet them in a warm way
  - get to the point quickly and explain the benefits for them as well
  - tell them exactly what they need to do and by when
  - include the link to your form or survey

- **#4 Contact the experts**

- **#5 Collect their responses and create your post**

- Once you write your post, tweet out a link to it and @mention the experts, then email the experts and thank them again

- **The other way you can do a roundup is to curate answers from online, public sources**

Tactic #5: Skyscraper technique

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

How to use the skyscraper technique

- The skyscraper technique involves looking at the content that's already out there and creating a bigger and better piece
- The easiest way to do this is to improve listicles by adding more items to them
- After you write the improved piece, you go to every blog that links to shorter lists on the topic and message them pointing out that you have a better list - they will usually agree to replace the link with yours
- Try to create the longest list you can so no one else will attempt to write a longer one (at least for a while)
- Steps for the skyscraper method:
- **#1 Find the biggest and most popular skyscrapers online**

  - you can use a tool like Buzzsumo or Ahrefs
  - look for the most shares, the most referrals, and the most links to the post
  - don't just copy and paste other people's lists, review each item and come up with your own description

- **#2 Build your own skyscraper**

  - check each item from other lists and highlight which ones you want to use
  - add content of your own
  - make sure everything is up to date
  - make the list easy to read and navigate
  - you can group the items by subtopics
  - the idea is to improve the quantity of items, but also their quality

- **#3 Promote your skyscraper**

  - whoever liked and shared the original lists you got inspiration from would probably share yours too
  - you can use Buzzsumo to find these people and message them (but it’s a paid feature)
  - search Google for the original article and you’ll find blogs who shared it as well
  - share your post on social media

Writing content for your audience

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Tips for writing good content

- Tips you should keep in mind whenever you write something:

- **#1 Write like a human being**

  - have a personal voice
  - if your company was a person, what kind of person would they be?
  - your voice has to match the content

- **#2 Be helpful**

  - anything you write should help the readers solve a problem

- **#3 Be original**

  - think of any new way you can write about a topic that others have written about before

- **#4 Use visuals**

  - add pictures, gifs, or graphics to your articles
  - they help break up the text and help get the point across

- **#5 Show and tell**

  - combine text with images to clarify whatever you're explaining

- **#6 Create reactions**

  - your post needs to get people thinking about a topic or start a conversation
  - ask the audience something at the end of your post

- **#7 Learn how to write**

  - make sure you don’t make any grammar mistakes or other errors
  - practice will help you improve
  - you can get an editor to help you

Creating great headlines

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Tips for writing headlines

- The headline of your article is the first thing people see and will determine whether they click on it
- The job of a headline is to grab the interest of your audience and to compel them to read your content
- Tips for writing headlines:

- **#1 Get to the point quickly**

  - people need to know what it's about before they open it

- **#2 Promise value**

  - be clear about how the post will help the readers

- **#3 Include relevant details**

  - add numbers, like "8 tips for doing x" or "How I increased x by 90%"

- **#4 Make it 6-10 words**

  - research shows that headlines that have between 6-10 words get the most clicks and engagement
  - people usually read the first 3 and the last 3 words of a headline - if there are 6 words, it means they read everything

- **#5 Use positive adjectives**

  - great, amazing, surprising, mind-blowing, etc.

- **#6 Make your headline a question and answer it in the post**

- **#7 Make your headline a teaser**

  - create curiosity to make people want to read further
  - don’t do this repeatedly and don’t be too mysterious

- Ask people you know for feedback on your headlines or use Coschedule.com’s headline analyzer

What is guest posting?

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

How guest posting helps you

- Guest posting means you write a post for someone else's blog or website
- This strategy is great because:
- **#1 Your post gets seen by someone else's audience**
- **#2 It leads to more traffic on your own website**
- **#3 If you guest post enough, you could be seen as an expert, and then you might get invited to do an interview or to speak at events**

Finding places to guest post

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Researching sites for guest posting

- Start with the blogs and people you already know
- Figure out if you could write something that can fit in with their other posts
- The easiest way to get your post accepted somewhere is through personal connections
- Most blogs will ask for previous examples of your work before accepting you
- Search for your topic on Google and add “guest post”, “write for us”, or “writers needed”.
- Search for guest bloggers and see where they posted - [your topic] + “my guest post” (in quotes)
- **Evaluate the blogs to see if they fit your needs:**
  - the content is focused on your industry
  - the audience is interested in your industry
  - the posts have good engagement from readers
  - the blog owner is active on social media (so they will share your post)
- Check if the blog/website has a section where you can sign up for a guest post or just fill out their contact form

- Some websites have certain requirements for guest posts
- If you're targeting big publications, you'll find tips online on how to write in order to get accepted by each one
- There are some pre-made lists out there of blogs that accept guest posts
- You have to start small and then ladder up

Pitching your post

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

How to pitch a post idea

- When contacting a blog/website to try to get accepted as a guest writer, keep these things in mind:

- **#1 Make sure your meet any basic requirements**

  - follow their rules, if they specify them on the site
  - if you need to link to previous articles of yours but don't have any, publish something on LinkedIn

- **#2 Every pitch should be unique**

  - personalize each email for the person you send it to
  - mention which of their posts you liked to show that you actually read their content

- **#3 Be prepared to pitch multiple ideas**

  - be specific when they ask for the topics you can write about - give them the actual titles

- **#4 Your pitch should be short and cover all of the basics**

- Example email to pitch your idea:

Hi Business Insider,

I'm a long time reader of your blog. Your posts about app development are really helpful, especially [TITLE HERE].

I'd love to contribute a post to Business Insider, and as an app developer myself, I think it speaks to the needs of your audience. It's called [ENTER TITLE HERE], and [GIVE A SHORT DESCRIPTION HERE].

As requested, I've attached a copy of my post and bio as a Word Doc. [or you can include Google Docs links]

Also, here are a few guest posts I've written before to give you a look at my style and engagement:
- LINK #1
- LINK #2
- LINK #3

Thanks for your consideration. Please let me know if you have any questions for me.

Cheers,
[Your name]

- After you send the email, be patient - you might hear from them right away, in a few weeks, or not at all.

Writing your post and what to do after

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

The guest posting process

- After you get the pitch approved, it's time to write the actual post

- #1 Make sure you follow the basic guidelines regarding links, branding, screenshots, etc.
- #2 Meet the expectations of that website's audience
- #3 Add links to other recent posts on their blog - this makes your post look like it belongs to the site
- #4 Stay focused on whatever pitch you provided - don't change your mind midway
- #5 Review your post to ensure you've met all the guidelines, to make sure it matches your pitch, and to make sure there are no grammar or spelling mistakes
- #6 Include a bio for yourself (company name, website, social media profiles)

- After you submit the post, it will take a while for the editors to review it

- If there are any issues, they'll get back to you and help you fix them

- If accepted, find out when your post will go up and prepare to promote it
- When the post is up, start telling people about it on social media
- Monitor the comments on the post and politely participate in the discussion
- Locate the social mentions of your post by using Tweetdeck or other similar tools, and then respond to people's comments
- Don't forget to send a thank you email to the person who worked with you
- Depending on what your goal was with the guest post, make sure you measure your success at the end

How to promote your content - Intro

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Promoting your piece

- Just because you published your content online doesn't mean people know it exists, that's why you need to promote it
- **It's a good idea to have an established process you can go through every time you publish something**
- Where you can promote your post: Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, Reddit, email newsletter, etc.
- Every time you're promoting your original post, you'll have to create a new shorter piece of content (a caption, a video, a tweet, an email)
- You can use a social media scheduling app (like Buffer or Meet Edgar), because usually you have to promote your post multiple times on the same platform for it to be effective
- Schedule a series of social posts over a few days at different times of day so everyone has a chance to see it
- Create an eye-catching message by using custom images

- Research shows that posts with images get 2-3 times more engagement than posts without images

- If you've mentioned any website or company in your post, contact them and let them know, so they can then share a link to the post

Getting influencers to promote your post

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Connecting with influencers

- **Influencers are people who have a large following and their posts get shared a lot**
- They're usually very active online and people care somewhat about their opinion
- Influencers make most of their money by advertising different products
- They're always looking for new stuff to share and brands to work with

- **Step #1 Identify an influencer in your industry**

  - search for your industry keywords on social media and see who has the most followers and the most engagement
  - use FollowerWonk, a tool created by Moz

- **Step #2 Connect with the influencer and try to build a relationship**

  - follow them, engage with them, link to them, share their content
  - try to be helpful to them in some way to make yourself noticed

- **Step #3 Contact them and ask for a share**

  - the post has to benefit them in a way or another in order for them to share it
  - you could ask for their opinion on the post before asking them to share it

- Don’t forget to thank them and continue building your relationship - this increases the chances that they’ll share your posts in the future as well

How to get your content linked to from other websites

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Getting links to your page

- When someone links to your post on their page, it makes your page more valuable in the eyes of the Google search engine
- #1 Choose your best post
- #2 Find popular posts that are related to yours and reach out to the writers
- You have to convince the people you reach out to that linking to your article will add value to their post
- **The easiest thing is to ask to be included in listicles and resource compilations**
- If the blog owners don't want to add your link or don't respond, you can add a comment on one of their posts and suggest your article
- Look for broader guides on topics in your industry and try to get then to link to your detailed post for people who want to read more in depth about one of the things they cover
- If you wrote a post where you linked to other people's articles, you can contact them and ask for a link in return

Creating a content calendar

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

Scheduling your posts

- A content calendar is a system you use to keep on schedule with creating and publishing content
- You can use CoSchedule.com or just a spreadsheet where you enter all the details
- **Content marketing works best when it's consistently published**
- Make sure you have a steady stream of posts to keep your audience engaged
- **Establish your "publishing cadence" - how often you publish - and stick to it**
- "The 12 touch rule" says that people have to read or hear about you 12 times on average before they actually convert
- **A content calendar helps you keep track of how many ideas you have in the pipeline and adjust the time you spend searching for new ones**
- You can start with posting twice a week and then see how it works and how much time it takes

- Try posting on different days of the week at first to see when the posts perform better
- Post different types of content and see which ones perform best
- Over time, you will figure out what works best and you can stick to that

How to tell if content marketing is working

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

How to know if your strategy works

- Measurement is the only way to know if you've succeeded
- Use Google Analytics to measure how well your content is doing. What to look at:

- **Page views**

  - figure out which type of content or format gets viewed more and when

- **Average time on page**

  - the more time readers spend on the page, the more valuable the content must be
  - pay attention to the percentage of people that stay for longer than 1 minute
  - time yourself while reading your article and compare it to the average

- **Bounce rate**

  - it's the percentage of readers that immediately leave after getting to your page
  - an abnormally high bounce rate might mean:
    - your site is ugly
    - your title is misleading
    - your writing is low quality

- Always interpret your analytics by considering your goals
- In Google Analytics, you can set up conversion tracking to see how many people actually converted and which pieces of content helped the most
- **Add more ways to keep readers on your page or your site, like suggesting other articles**
- Use a site like FullStory to track what people do once they land on your website
- For social platforms, you can use tools that measure engagement to see how well different posts did

- **Best tips for improving your content strategy:**
  #1 Write better content
  #2 Produce content consistently
  #3 Look for clear successes and try to duplicate them

Repurposing

H2GY1K

LECTURE SUMMARY

Covered in this lecture:

How to extend your content's value

- **Repurposing means finding a new place or a new function for your content - basically, you create something new out of something old**
- If one of your pieces of content is doing well, you want to extend that value for as long as you can
- **With different formats, you can reach new audiences**
- If you wrote an article, here's how you can repurpose it:
  - turn it into a video for Youtube
  - create an infographic
  - reword it as an answer on Quora
  - take key quotes and post them on social media
  - create images or a slideshow with the key points
  - create an e-book by combining a series of posts
- Rewording a piece shouldn't take as long as it took to write it in the first place
- Figure out which other platforms your audience likes and spends time on
- **You can also promote just a few parts of the piece and then link to the original post**